

JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)
WORK SESSION
MINUTES SYNOPSIS

March 30, 2004
5:00 PM

City Hall
Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER: The SeaTac Joint City Council/Planning Commission Work Session was called to order by Mayor Frank Hansen at 5:15 p. m.

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Frank Hansen, Deputy Mayor Terry Anderson, Councilmembers Chris Wythe, Ralph Shape, and Joe Brennan. Absent: Councilmembers Gene Fisher and Don DeHan.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT: Bruce Rayburn, City Manager; Mary Mirante Bartolo, City Attorney; Julie Elsensohn, Sr. Assistant City Attorney; Judith Cary, City Clerk; Steve Butler, Planning Director; Holly Anderson, Sr. Planner; Mike Scarey, Sr. Planner; Brian Galloway, Associate Planner; and Lawrence Ellis, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Linda Snider, Members Joe Dixon, Mark Siegel, and Rick Lucas. Absent: Member Tom Dantzler.

Review and Discussion about the Planning Commission's 2003 Accomplishments and 2004 Goals:

Mrs. Snider provided documentation of the PC's 2003 Accomplishments and 2004 Goals in the Council Packets. She stated the PC is proud of their accomplishments, adding they have worked very hard to study issues and give recommendations throughout the year. The PC's goals are basically to provide recommendations to Council to assist in their decision-making process. She reviewed the Goals for 2004 regarding the updating and implementing of the Comprehensive Plan (CP): She inquired as to whether the PC's goals fall in line with the goals the Council needs of the PC. The PC's mission is to serve the Council.

Councilmember Wythe stated his concern about implementation of some of the objectives that come before the Council. There are great ideas already in the CP, as well as citizens' input over the last several months. His concern is as the Council receives input as to neighborhood enhancements, implementation has not been as strong as it could be. Mayor Hansen stated that under the City's form of government, the PC makes recommendation to the Council and the Council makes policy to the staff and the staff does the administrative work. Councilmember Wythe stated that he is concerned that steps towards the City's vision are not delineated in the CP.

Mr. Lucas presented his understanding of the PC's role and detailed some background on the City. He felt that because of the types of businesses in SeaTac, and the 911 incident and economy downswing, the City has not been in a position to implement plans and projects at the fast rate it has been able to prior to these events. However, the City is beginning to regain momentum. The PC was interested in the Council Retreat and what direction the Council gave the PC as to their role through the staff. The PC was surprised at the feedback from the comprehensive survey filled out by 40 residents in wanting community type businesses in the neighborhoods. As a member of SeaTac Economic Partnership (STEP), he stated that the group is now investigating what types of businesses can come into the City and be viable. This is being done by a consulting firm with Hotel/Motel (H/M) Tax funds. He thinks the City is beginning to gain momentum in new businesses coming in and helping the old businesses grow.

Councilmember Shape stated he feels the South Riverton Height area will become extremely important to the City in the future as the light rail project progresses. Upon a question posed by Councilmember Shape, Mrs. Snider stated the PC first met with Burien PC, then the Tukwila PC two years ago, and lastly, the Kent PC and shared information on each of the Cities' plans. The PC keeps in touch with the surrounding Cities in order to find their goals and when feasible, work together on plans.

Upon a question posed by Deputy Mayor Anderson as to what feedback Mr. Butler has received from other Planning Directors, he replied that the Planning Directors hold monthly meetings based on his available and issues to be discussed. In one such meeting, Burien's downtown planning was discussed.

Mr. Siegel stated, as the newest member of the PC, he is still trying to understand the PC duties. He volunteered for this position to help better the City and assist the Council. The citizen's comments are many and the range is in all areas of concerns and suggestions as to what should be done with the City. He would like to know what issues the Council wants the PC to focus on. Deputy Mayor Anderson stated that in talking with the citizens, the topics are concerns as to more sidewalks, street improvements and no more parking lots. Mr. Siegel stated that these are viable issues and citizen involvement is critical.

PC 2003 Accomplishments and 2004 Goals (Continued): Mr. Dixon stated that the citizens' recommendations and priorities are not being responded to by the City. He stated the citizens are concerned about what is being planned for sidewalks on Military Road, are the traffic issues being addressed, residents are saying there are not enough patrols in their neighborhoods and there are break-ins and other vandalism and there is a need for more law enforcement officers at Angle Lake Park., and more directional signs at McMicken Heights Community Club to name a few of their concerns. Responses to citizens concerns need to be addressed, as well as the budgets issues and project time frames.

City Center Concept:

Mrs. Snider stated with discussions at community meetings, she got the sense that the City Center Plan was being abandoned. Comments indicated a real need for a City Center for shopping and having a feeling of community. The Council, staff and PC worked very hard to develop a good plan. She wondered what is happening with the plans, stating that the recent proposed development on International Boulevard (IB) is in conflict with the City Center Plan. She wondered whether mixed-use is viable in SeaTac. This issue needs to be discussed.

Mayor Hansen stated that he agreed but he felt the staff did an excellent job of responding to the citizens' concerns. The City Center Plan is extremely complex and many hours have been devoted to it and no real plan has been initiated that will work for the City, the residents and the business communities.

City Manager Rayburn stated, at the first town meetings the Council hosted in the early 1990's, the residents' issues were to stop the flooding in yards and to build more sidewalks. There is not enough funding available to build all the sidewalks the citizens want. They are being constructed as the budget permits. Staff has been working hard to achieve progress in the list of citizens' comments and recommendations. A lot of their suggestions are not in the City's Comprehensive Plan (CP).

Deputy Mayor Anderson stated she felt the issue is not being responded to but rather finding an effective way to get the word back to the people.

Mrs. Snider stated that perhaps there is a need to re-review the City Center concept. Mayor Hansen stated that one of the complexities is it is planned on privately-owned property and the owners' needs have to be considered.

Councilmember Brennan stated that another issue the City had was with a road to be built through the Center crossing through the Bow Lake Mobile Home Park. He added that the price of land is extremely high. The most important business is the businesses currently in SeaTac; they are 70 percent of the City's revenue. Another thing is to encourage the citizens to come to the Council Meetings, perhaps the meetings should go to the people again.

Councilmember Wythe stated that the CP process centers on delivering some amenities. The City Center Plan is an ambitious plan. Perhaps there are less ambitious plans to work on. The City has to work with the community, not do for the community. The communities need representatives from the various areas to get their ideas out to the Council and staff.

Mr. Lucas stated that he feels the Council and staff has been doing a good job. He stated that most of the parking lots would love to have hotels and retail shops on their property but currently, the City does not know what the businesses would be. The City has agreed to have the H/M funds be used to find out what those businesses are. That needs to be communicated to the public. The City staff has been responding to their concerns. That message needs to be heard. He suggested the citizens' questions be addressed in SeaTac Report or answers be sent to the 40 concern residents' addresses who answered the survey. He added that the percentage of attendance at SeaTac's Council Meetings is equal to that of other Cities.

Senior Center Status:

Mayor Hansen stated that the City is moving ahead on this issue by having done the study, however, it is to be in the future. He added that the City currently has a good Senior Program at the North SeaTac Park Community Center (NSTPCC). Eventually, the City plans to have its own Senior Center. Councilmember Shape stated that the seniors would like to think it is in the near future.

Discussion of whether or not the PC should be involved in review of the Proposed Development Agreements:

Mrs. Snider inquired as to whether the Council considered the PC being involved in the development agreement process. The main issue is that development affects the entire City and the PC has both residents and business members and their input and prospective could be valuable to the Council in their decision-making process.

PC involvement in review of the Proposed Development Agreements (Continued): Mayor Hansen stated that the development agreements are extremely complex and legal documents and while working on them, there is confidential information that should not be divulged in their draft form. They are really a staff, particularly legal, issue. The PC can be briefed on the status of these agreements.

Mr. Siegel stated that the PC does not want to impede the process; they want to review the agreements to be sure it corresponds with the City's CP goals. Councilmember Wythe stated the PC should be reviewing agreements and their involvement makes good sense to him. Mr. Lucas stated that one of the main developments in the City was the City Center Plan and its concept has gone away. The PC needs to know the City's development plans. The Budget development agreement is being terminated by Budget Car Rental due to lack of City interest. Ann Lawler, Attorney, Jameson Babbitt Stites & Lombard, Budget's attorney for the development agreement, who was in the audience, stated that she is the attorney for the new operator of that site on the long term ground leases subject to the ownership of the Boysens. If they did not develop their property into an enhanced parking facility by the end of 2003, it would terminate with its own terms. The current operators bought the lease interest with the hope that they would be able to go forward with the development agreement but were not able to come to financial terms with the Boysens and for that reason have agreed to let it terminate.

Mayor Hansen asked that the PC be briefed as these agreements come forth. The current development agreement for the City Center in the South 188th Street area is for mixed-use and that is not working out. He asked staff and PC to look at this area to make it work. Mrs. Snider, on behalf of the PC, thanked the Council for attending this Work Session.

Adjournment: The Work Session adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Executive Session: Contract Negotiations (30 minutes)